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A Visit to Paris in 1814; being a review of the moral, political, intellectual and social condition of the French Capital. By John Scott. Philadelphia, republished by Edward Parker. 12mo. pp. 310.

Though France is crowded in every part of it with English travellers and English families, who make it their residence for years together, she seems destined not to please the travel-writers of that nation. Before the revolution, they complained, that their Marquesses wore red-heeled, and their peasants wooden, shoes; that the ladies wore rouge, and the gentlemen embroidery; that the people were effeminate, enslaved and overrun with priests and superstitious practices: now they complain, that they are rude and ferocious, destitute of religion, turbulent and unmanageable. There may be some truth in all these assertions, but there is also much exaggeration. This book was written to be popular in England, and of course direct flattery of his own country and countrymen, is often brought in to contrast more strongly with the vices of Frenchmen and France. This is perfectly natural from the habits of an English editor of a newspaper, but it is not the most desirable line of conduct for a traveller.

It is, perhaps, unfortunate for Mr. Scott, that we have been so recently engaged with the travels of a Frenchman in England; the comparison, in respect to candour, absence of prejudice, and what is still more remarkable, style and purity of writing, is vastly against him. This work is written in the most vicious taste, and is a specimen of a large proportion of modern English productions, which threaten the entire corruption of the language, and to render its classick writers, at no distant period, obsolete. Barbarous words are coined, or raked from ancient kennels, where they had been buried in fortunate oblivion. Not only words, but manner also, is bad. There is an attempt, by laborious research of epithet, to crowd a sentence with meaning. Their sentences are like their own stage coaches, which originally destined to carry four *insides*, are loaded with *outsides* and baggage to an inconvenient and dangerous extent; the result therefore is, that instead of carrying more meaning, the

sense is completely overturned, and the whole involved in confusion. Let us however do justice to the author, though his style is faulty, and his prejudices, from habit as a party writer, of seeing defects only on one side, obvious; yet he is often a sagacious observer, he appears to judge from his own impressions, and his descriptions are often just and animated.

We must here make a few general remarks, on the violent manner in which the state of social life in France, is represented by this and other writers, as being in the lowest state of degradation. Possibly, in her altered condition, some feeling of pity may excite us on this point. When France was powerful, arrogant, and mischievous, we would have urged all mankind to resist and combat her; but, when she is overthrown, broken and degraded, our attacks should cease. We would borrow a maxim from the English gladiators, and refrain from a blow, when the opponent was down. If *debellare superbos* was the proper motto in one case, *parcere subjectis* should operate in the other.

In pursuing this declamation against French society, it should be recollected, that Paris, which principally furnishes the theme, is the grand resort of all the debauched voluptuaries of Europe. There they live in a round of decent dissipation and polished voluptuousness; mixing only in circles equally seducing and dangerous, without morality, but without grossness. We have known strangers from different countries, who have resided in Paris for years, without any intercourse with domestick life, or any visit in any private house, except perhaps an occasional dinner at their Banker's, or their Ambassadour's. These persons having encountered no chastity themselves, are very apt to be incredulous about its existence; and go away representing France to be very charming and very immoral, having constantly found it to be both.

This, however, it will be admitted, has little to do with the great mass of society. The truth is, that in France, as in all other countries, it is extremely difficult for a stranger to get initiated into the best private society; a difficulty which is commonly increased, in proportion to the size of the capital, where it exists. To penetrate into this society is not more easy in Paris, than it is in London. There must generally be some striking circumstances to favour it. Very brilliant powers of conversation, great accomplish-

ments in musick, high rank, great fame, or even notoriety, may be passports to certain assemblies in fashionable life; but even then, the society is neither intimate nor connected. There was one winter in London, when any dark looking man, unable to speak English, and smelling of cigars, might have passed, as a Spanish Patriot, into the most fashionable routs. During another, any fierce, whiskered countenance, in a hussar uniform, with an *unspeakable* name, was welcomed into the same circles. In Paris, Persian and Turkish Ministers and their suite, with long beards and turbaned heads, and their heavy composure of face, were always favourites in society, though they could not speak a word of the language; even we, simple, plain republicans had our day, and there was a time, when the most polished coterie of Paris, was imperfect, without the acquaintance of Dr. Franklin, and for many years after him, his countrymen were received in the most flattering manner. In ordinary cases, there must be considerable merit, good recommendations, good luck, dignified patience, and perseverance without impertinence, to fairly circulate in the best society. A partial admission may be often obtained, and yet to the disappointment of the individual, he will get but one step forward. A friend of ours, who had lived long in Paris, once remarked, that society in that city was a magick circle, you continually fancied you were within it, and as regularly found yourself on the outside.

That there is much immorality in France, that the foundations of society are at some points sapped, cannot, unfortunately, be denied; a knowledge of human character, and of the events that have taken place in that country, would shew this must be the case, even to those who had never visited it. But the coarse, indiscriminate denunciation of its social state, which is so very common, is unreasonable and untrue. If France is inferiour to some, she is greatly superiour to many others, and there are several capitals in Europe, where there is more general degradation, more odious and infamous profligacy than in Paris.

We shall intersperse our copious extracts with a few remarks.

‘ A large crucifix on the pier of Dieppe, seen from the deck of the packet, first caused me to *feel* that I was about to land on foreign ground, and mingle with manners, and

‘ looks, and language, to which I had been unaccustomed. This feeling, when experienced for the first time, is a strong and touching one. I am not ashamed to confess, that I looked earnestly at the hills which rose before me, to discover something *French* about them ; they seemed, however, to be round and green, very much like those I had left behind. My eye earnestly sought out the clusters of farm-houses ; they indicated life and intelligence, that formed part of a different system of sentiments, manners and expressions, from that to which I belonged. The sensation that is caused by this conviction is not easily described ;—you seem to be going, as it were, beyond yourself,—and you are surprised to find that your experience does not furnish you with a single anticipation of any of the appearances that are about to present themselves. This is a novelty, indeed, after a certain age, and revives again, in the exhausted and torpid breast, that activity of observation, quickness of feeling, and fruitfulness of idea, that give to the moments of childhood as much of the essence of enjoyment as is contained in years of after-life. While a traveller keeps within his own country, he expects that, with something new, he will meet with more that is common ; he knows how he will be received at the inns ; he is conversant with the aspect of the towns : and the very features of the earth regard him, as he passes, with an air of old acquaintanceship. But when, for the first time, he quits his own country, he is prepared for nothing ; every thing comes upon him with the force of a first impression ; and nothing startles him more than the numerous resemblances to those objects and habits with which he is familiar. These he least expects to encounter, and at these, therefore, he is most surprised. The reported discovery of *roads* in the moon, excited more popular admiration than the account of any monstrous prodigy on its surface would have done.

‘ As the packet entered within the pier, the interest became stronger, for we were advancing within crowds of men and women, and into the bosom of the strange place. We could already hear the youngest children, and the most miserable of the poor, talking a language which we had been accustomed to consider as the proof of a liberal education. It was Sunday, and the beach and quay were thronged with persons waiting to see us land. “ For the love of Heaven,” cried an English admiral’s lady, “ look at that creature in

‘ the red petticoat ! ’ She was a fishwoman, and certainly
‘ presented a figure very grotesque to an English eye. The
‘ grey woven jackets of these women are tight around the
‘ waist ; the expansion where the petticoat begins is im-
‘ mense, but the petticoat itself is short. Both their hands
‘ are usually in their pockets ; they walk along with a care-
‘ less air, stooping forward their bodies ; their physiognomies
‘ are sharp, but do not indicate rudeness ; and from their ears,
‘ huge golden drops and rings are suspended, which are be-
‘ queathed from mother to daughter with pride, and preserv-
‘ ed in the family with care. Let me do them the justice
‘ to praise their cleanliness ; their dress is remarkably com-
‘ plete and trim ;—their raised caps, with long loose flaps
‘ hanging over their shoulders, are white as snow ; and I
‘ had an opportunity of confirming this observation in other
‘ towns of the coast, and on other days of the week besides
‘ Sunday.

‘ We could also discern some ladies on the pier, and their
‘ flowing shawls, high bonnets, and tricksome gait, bid our
‘ young gentlemen prepare their compliments in a new lan-
‘ guage and in a new style. I had been told not to expect
‘ much female beauty in France ; but the first face I could
‘ distinctly perceive, was that of a very beautiful French
‘ girl, who leaned, with an air of triumphant weakness, on
‘ the arm of her beau, a fierce fellow, with a cocked hat, and
‘ cockade, while she regarded us with a look which cannot
‘ be described otherwise than by saying it conveyed, with
‘ a marked intention, the quintessence of feminine expres-
‘ sion. Her companions (for she was surrounded by several
‘ of her own sex) were excited into smiles by the view of
‘ our party, whose appearance sea-sickness, and a night
‘ spent on board the packet, had rendered very squalid ;
‘ and, as the vessel advanced, they advanced also, to be
‘ close to the landing of so singular a set. Each had her pro-
‘ tector, by whose side she tripped with a conscious short-
‘ ness of step, a soliciting bend of her form, balanced by a
‘ lively confidence in her eyes and smiles.

‘ But the most impressive feature of the crowd before us,
‘ and that which most struck us with a sense of novelty and
‘ of interest, was its military aspect. Almost every man had
‘ some indication of the military profession about his person,
‘ sufficient to denote that he had been engaged in war ; at
‘ the same time, there was a self-willed variety in the dress

‘ of each, which had a very unpleasant effect, inasmuch as
‘ it prevented us from recognizing that *stamped assurance*
‘ *of legitimacy as an armed force*, which is impressed on
‘ the aspect of British troops. We could scarcely imagine,
‘ that the dark visaged beings, some in long, loose great
‘ coats, some in jackets, some in cocked hats, some in round
‘ ones, some in caps, who darted at us keen looks of a very
‘ over-clouded cast, had ever belonged to regiments, steady,
‘ controlled, and lawful ;—they seemed, rather, the frag-
‘ ments of broken-up gangs, brave, dextrous, and fierce,
‘ but unprincipled, and unrestrained. Much of this irregu-
‘ larity and angriness of appearance, was doubtless occasion-
‘ ed by the great disbandment of the army that had just tak-
‘ en place. The disbanded had no call to observe the nice-
‘ ties of military discipline, although they still retained such
‘ parts of their military uniform as they found convenient.
‘ They had not then either pursuits to occupy their time,
‘ or even prospects to keep up their hopes ; they still loung-
‘ ed about in idleness, although their pay had been stopped ;
‘ and disappointment and necessity threw into their faces an
‘ expression deeper than that of irritation,—approaching, in
‘ fact, to the indications of indiscriminate and inveterate
‘ hatred. They carried about with them in their air, the
‘ branded characteristic of forlorn men, whose interests
‘ and habits opposed them to the peace of mankind ;—men
‘ who would cry with the desperate Constance,

“ War ! war ! no peace ! peace is to me a war ! ”

KING JOHN.

‘ When a Margate hoy evacuates her cargo, the crowd on
‘ the pier is usually considerable, but how different in its
‘ general aspect from that which now presented itself ! At
‘ the English watering-place, the arriving passengers find
‘ collected to receive them, snug mercantile physiognomies,
‘ countenances indicating a settled and comfortable mode of
‘ living, unmarked by irritation or alarm,—and a kind of lazy
‘ independence of manner, which by those who do not pos-
‘ sess a good deal of knowledge of the nicer traits of charac-
‘ ter, is likely to be taken for insolence. In the French
‘ crowd, on the contrary, vivacity is every where appa-
‘ rent :—the soldiers are vivaciously surly ; the ladies viva-
‘ ciously charming ; the attendant-porters and masters of

‘hotels vivaciously solicitous; the common people vivaciously observant and assiduous. “Permit me to have the honour to carry little *My Lord* up the ladder,” said a fellow with a rightcap on his head, and a ragged jacket on his back, at the same time snatching up a little boy who stood timidly in his mother’s hand on the deck. He, and three others, followed the party to the hotel, and stood silently in the room. An English gentleman, anxious to make his essay, and thinking that on these persons he might safely try his skill, addressed them in terms of obsequiousness, which he intended to rival the French in their own country. “To what were he and his friends indebted for the favour of the present visit?” The spokesman of the set replied, that Messieurs, pointing to the three behind, and himself, had been so fortunate as to assist the landing of the bountiful English, and they craved the honour of being remembered for their services. “But why,” rejoined the Englishman, “follow us all the way here; why not demand your recompense at the vessel?”—It would have been most impolite in poor people like us to have forced ourselves on your notice in the street,” was the cunning answer, which could only be handsomely rewarded by a donation of several francs.

‘We entered the hotel with our eyes springing out before our steps, on the alert to detect curiosities. The host led the way, talking such English, that we were obliged to beg he would be intelligible to Englishmen by speaking French. A hasty glance, as we passed the kitchen, gave us a glimpse of a man-cook, who gratified us excessively, being exactly what Hogarth has represented, as a specimen of the tribe, in the famous picture of the Gates of Calais:—indications of soups and stews were abundant; and the female servants, in “fancifully wild costume,” took their stations within view, their faces all sparkling and up, as we say of spruce beer.

‘The room into which we were shewn, gave strong evidence that we were not in England. It would have been fine and elegant, if it had not been out of repair, and dirty. Glasses of a size which we never see in our country, but in the houses of persons of fortune, hung on the cheerless white walls, in frames, the gilding of which was mostly worn off. A magnificent marble chimney-piece, and a superb hearth of the same, were by no means in harmony with

‘ a naked brick-floor. Wash-hand basins stood on tables that had been superb in gold, and were still curious in carving. After our voyage, several operations conducive to personal comfort were necessary ; these, such as washing, shaving, combing, &c. were all to be performed, by all the party, in the room devoted to breakfast. But the breakfast afterwards was good, the host and the waiters were civil ; and their guests, in the heartiness and freshness of their feelings, found every thing, however strange and even incommodious, a source of amusement and pleasure.’

The description here of the feelings on first seeing a strange country, is lively and natural. When he comes to the portrait of the military aspect of the crowd, which had nothing in it of “ *that stamped assurance of legitimacy as an armed force*, which is impressed on the aspect of British troops ;” the crude absurdity both in style and reasoning of the newspaper editor, appears. Suppose a Frenchman had been at Portsmouth or Chatham when three or four ships were paid off, and the officers and crews discharged without much prospect of employment, to seek their fortune in their undress costume ; he would have been very ridiculous if he had, in disliking their looks, began to talk about the *stamped assurance of legitimacy*, in the Imperial guard.

The remarks on the uninhabited, and ruinous, decayed mansions that he met with on the road, would naturally strike an Englishman, as such an appearance in the country in England is extremely uncommon. This is one of the prominent marks of the revolution.

‘ The general aspect of the country between the coast and the capital of France, especially that part of it nearest the former, gives the idea of a kingdom that has suffered ; that has been reduced from what it was to what it is. It is apparent that something has happened to it, which has not only stopped improvement, but actually removed its condition downwards. Many of the Chateaus are in ruins ; others are inhabited by the poor, whose children were to be seen playing in roofless and windowless summer-houses, standing in desolate gardens, which give an affecting token that calamity has befallen the original pos-

‘ sessor. There is something infinitely more melancholy
‘ in the appearance of that land, the capacities of which are
‘ superiour to the state of its inhabitants, than of that where
‘ the people are evidently cramped and depressed by the
‘ deficiencies of nature, and in the general absence of means.
‘ It is more pitiable to see the human body falling away
‘ from its coverings, than incommoded by overgrowing
‘ them. France, in that part of it through which I travelled,
‘ is full of signs that disorganization and destruction have
‘ been at work. Neglected avenues, unemployed out-
‘ houses, unappropriated means of various kinds, all tend to
‘ shew that the population has been reduced in circum-
‘ stances as well as in numbers. Large houses by the road
‘ side are almost deserted ; and their few occupiers are of
‘ so mean and miserable a description, that it is evident
‘ they must have been thrown into their present places by
‘ some violence, that has removed the natural owners from
‘ their proper spheres, and filled their situations with those
‘ who are incompetent to discharge their functions towards
‘ society. The consequence is, a general appearance of
‘ impoverishment and unsuitableness. To judge from such
‘ hasty observation, as passing along the roads and through
‘ the towns would permit, I should certainly say that men
‘ were few in this part of the country of France ; but al-
‘ though the fact is probable in itself, and affirmed on better
‘ authority than I can offer in its support, I do not wish to
‘ press my testimony as adding any thing to the evidence.

‘ It is affirmed, indeed, and by those who may be deemed
‘ good authorities, that the agricultural condition of France
‘ is much improved since the Revolution ;—in no less a
‘ ratio, it is said, than one-fifth. The fact is certainly not
‘ improbable, nor at all inconsistent with what has been
‘ stated. In the first place, agricultural science has made a
‘ considerable progress in Europe generally within that
‘ period, and this must have effected a considerable change
‘ for the better in agricultural practice in France, as well
‘ as elsewhere, had the old system continued : in the second,
‘ it is not to be doubted that the breaking up of the large
‘ estates, consequent on the destruction of the nobility,
‘ and the throwing of the land of France, in smaller distri-
‘ butions, into the hands of persons of active habits, interest-
‘ ed to render it as profitable as possible, would be followed
‘ by an improvement of cultivation. The question is,

‘ whether this increased production of the earth, which certainly is in itself calculated to be a source of increased national prosperity and individual happiness, has in reality been so to this kingdom? It does not follow as a matter of course, that the growth of grain, &c. must render a people affluent in their general condition; for on this principle the Indians, whose country produces gold and precious stones, should be esteemed wealthier than the merchants of Leadenhall-street. It does appear to me that, as yet, France has not reaped much benefit from the alteration: there seem to have been counteracting causes hitherto at work, thwarting the best tendencies of what has resulted from her political changes,—but these changes have certainly laid the foundation for much future good, and under a wise superintendence it cannot be long of appearing.

‘ I ought to mention, that these observations chiefly apply to the country between Dieppe and Rouen; less of the character in question is noticeable between Rouen and Paris,—that is to say, it is less marked, but the general cast of feature is the same. Yet, although the condition of the people seemed low, I had soon occasion to observe, that their spirits and manners are of a lighter, and, according to first appearances, of a more cordial quality than those of England. I had not travelled far before I was presented with the sight of one of those rustick dances, which almost inseparably connect themselves with our pleasantest ideas of continental scenery, inasmuch as they are a very favourite topick of description in the most graceful fables, and most interesting narratives, that have touched on continental customs. Perhaps the reality did not appear quite so swimmingly elegant, and elasticly joyous, as the fancy of the thing had been. In Sterne’s account of the dancing grace after supper, the young men, if I recollect rightly, changed their sabots, or wooden shoes, for others more neat in their look, and more adapted to lively motion;—but on the road to Rouen they retained them. These gave a heavy prancing air to the steps of the lads; nor were the girls exactly the “creatures of the element;” which in imagination trip on velvet verdure, with a gayety that has nothing of the coarseness of mirth, and a tenderness that is purified from the grossness of sense. It was evident enough, that the gallantry of these rural dancers was not a whit more sentimental, than we find

‘ it in the inn-yards of our great North-road, when the passing coachmen pay their devoirs to the expectant chamber-maids. Nevertheless the village dance of France, is a very agreeable addition to the other rural objects, that salute the travelling stranger. The old folks sitting with an air of ruminating complacency by the side of the merry whirl, give a family look to the group ; and the youthful couples, all animation, notwithstanding the utter absence of eatables and drinkables—(which are absolutely necessary to even tolerable good humour when people meet in England)—and all activity, notwithstanding the heaviness of their wooden shoes, afford a very striking specimen of a nation, where the current of existence glides lightly on,—taking a brisker turn from its impediments, catching sparkles from its shallowness, and throwing a dazzling effect around its deepest falls, at the bottom of which it collects again to rush onward in an undiminished, and even more ardent stream. Personal deprivations, of most kinds, are, probably, more numerous in France than in England ; but it is certain that sorrow and suffering do not present themselves so frequently to casual observation in the former country as in the latter. The aggravations of a harsh spirit are more common here than there : the necessitous with us are perpetually quarrelling and tormenting among themselves. The husband spends his pittance in getting drunk, and then tumbles home to beat his wretched, and not very resigned wife and children : cries and altercation are always heard near the dwellings of our miserales ; but the French poor are of a different temperament. Their minds do not swell and chafe under the influence of severe circumstances. This may be, and in my opinion is, because they want depth ; the storm that throws the Atlantick into a terrible commotion, only causes a few ripples on the surface of a garden pond ; the mere pleasure-boat, of course, rides most safely and pleasantly on the latter,—while the ocean, with all its dangers and deformities, is the sphere for high enterprize, and affords the means for effecting the noblest purposes.

‘ As it grew dark we passed through some small towns, in each of which we hurried by several lighted-up-houses of publick reception, where crowds of both sexes were assembled, apparently all courteousness and decorum,—regaling with such weak beverages as a very small beer,

‘and coffee,—and gratifying the jiggish propensities of their minds by the sound of fiddles. The labouring Englishman has but little disposition to regale himself in the company of women, and is still less inclined to shew to his female equals those forms of deference and gallant attentions, which are parts of the established system of genteel society. It would seem as if he spurned courtesy from him, in a bitter sense of its inapplicability to the necessary coarseness of his condition. The quick feeling of what is ridiculous and unsuitable, which distinguishes our people, has a tendency to make them deride all forms that are strongly contrasted to realities, and to throw away with a desperate disdain, all that finery of manner that is not of a-piece with their circumstances.’

The following sketch of a *full blood* cockney on a week's visit to Paris, is drawn with humour and spirit. There were thousands of both sexes equally ignorant, who went over on a similar trip, and exasperated the hatred of the French, already humiliated by disgrace, with their vulgarity, their insolence and rudeness. In the vexatious exclamation of the French officer against the tranquillity of Europe, *I shall be always a captain*, we have an expression of French vivacity, it is true, but of sentiment, that might have been heard without crossing the Alps, the Rhine, or the Channel. Mr. Scott might have asked the subalterns of the six hundred generals in the English army, of the myriads of Captains and Lieutenants in the British navy, and the vast majority of them would have sighed at the tranquillity of Europe. But the English have been so much in the habit of attributing all the ambition, all the turbulence, all the love of war to their enemies; that they never think of any similar passions among themselves. It is the curse of Europe, that the military spirit, and the military interest is wholly predominant in every country but England; and it is only mitigated there, by the resources which their innumerable colonies and their commerce afford them, to employ the dissatisfied of the disbanded professions.

‘The chances of travelling threw amongst our party a young English shopkeeper, who had taken it into his head to pay a visit to Paris of one week's duration. He must, he said, be back to business by Monday, for the

‘ bustling time was coming on. He knew not one word of the French language, nor a single individual in the French capital: his days and nights had been devoted, not to Belles-Lettres, but to the ledger; yet he was determined to see for himself what was fine in the Louvre. This was the great object of his expedition, and it was disappointed,—for the Louvre was shut against the public when he arrived, and he did not stay long enough to enable us to fulfil our promise of procuring him a permission to be admitted. He was an excellent national specimen, of faults as well as of good qualities,—and furnished some amusing contrasts on the road; so that his introduction here will probably be held very excusable. Never were instinctive curiosity, personal confidence, and regardless intrepidity, more conspicuous than in the travels of this personage. He knew but one side of every question, and he was as positive as if he had spent his life in impartial examination; he had provided for nothing, but he was quite sure of finding himself comfortable in every thing. He had not procured a passport, for he was certain passports were all nonsense,—they would never dare to stop an Englishman; one could travel all over England without a passport. He had no letter of credit, or French money of any kind; but he had plenty of bank-notes, and he would like to see a Frenchman refuse a Bank of England note! Of course he was exposed to many difficulties, which, had he been alone, he would have found very serious; but he treated them all with the utmost carelessness, and attributed them to the awkwardness, and ignorance of the people amongst whom he had come.

‘ The first occurrence that a little shook his notion, that an Englishman might stride like a superiour being over France, just as he pleased, attending to none of its customs or rules, and treated with respectful submission by its inhabitants,—was the entrance of a young French dragoon officer, of a fine commanding figure, and authoritative expression of face, into the Diligence. Our shopkeeper saluted him with just such a look of familiar examination, as that with which Sir Joseph Banks would regard an inhabitant of a South Sea island on his first visit to Soho square: but there was a checking haughtiness in the returned glances, that soon had its influence on the spirits and behaviour of our countryman. The soldier, it was

‘ easy to see, had no feeling of partiality towards the foreigners he had accidentally joined : and he soon explained the state of his mind in this respect, by pulling out of his pocket a snuff-box, on the top of which there was a beautiful portrait of Napoleon in enamel. He carried his devotion so far, as to bear about his person another portrait of the same individual suspended by a black ribbon, worn round his neck. He was evidently a gentleman, and was the first we had seen in France who bore that assurance in his external appearance : this circumstance I believe repressed our companion, far more than the fierce sword and fiercer looks of the stranger. Besides, all that our traveller had read in his country’s newspapers of that monster Buonaparte, rushed into his mind, and to have before his eyes, and actually touching his knees, a man who wore the pictures of such a wretch, who clearly regretted his downfall, and who had most probably taken a part in his dreadful deeds, quite bewildered the comprehension, and overpowered the senses of the Englishman. He probably would not have felt more alarmed or horror-struck if Doctor Faustus, immediately after making over his soul to the Devil, had sat down within six inches of him ; or if one of those human beings who float down the Ganges, devouring corpses, had come reeking from such a repast to breathe in his face.

‘ The officer resisted conversation with more firmness than is usual in France : it generally happens there that sulkeness soon gives way to loquacity, but our military companion cut off the approaches to his sentiments, and shut himself up in almost total incommunicativeness. Once only he made an observation which bore on the state of publick affairs ;—and it was perfectly explanatory of the whole system of his thinking—its causes as well as its condition. Something was said to convey a civil compliment to France, in an expression of satisfaction that she was now open to the visits of Englishmen, and a hope was added, that this pleasant intercourse might last, and the tranquillity of Europe remain uninterrupted.—The remark was not addressed to the officer, but he replied to it, evidently under a strong impulse. “ Very good, Gentlemen,—this tranquillity of Europe is a fine thing,—but will it not keep me “ *always a Captain ?* ” *Toujours Capitaine*, was the emphatic conclusion of this sudden burst from taciturnity.

‘He did not long continue with us, and the traveller of a week looked after him as he descended the steps of the vehicle, as a man looks after the smoke of a piece of artillery, that has suddenly gone off near him, and startled him more through the influence of surprise than of fear. Our countryman withdrew his looks slowly from the disappearing object of his astonishment, and then fixed his eyes on ours, as if to say—“*Well this is something, however!*” To those of us who had spoken to the Frenchman, he addressed himself with that sort of admiring curiosity for information, which the crowd, who visit a menagerie of wild beasts, shew towards the man who dare put his hand into the lion’s mouth, and venture within reach of the tiger’s paw, “Did he really, then, like Buonaparte?”—“Had he been at Moscow?”—“Was he likely to rebel against Louis the Eighteenth?”

‘But this serious surprise over, there was something indiscribably droll in the easy scorn, with which the person in question encountered all the novelties that the roads of France presented,—except indeed the novelties of the table, against which he seriously protested, and for some time maintained a very determined resistance, repulsing from him fricaséed pullets and stewed veal, with a haughty disdain, until he was subdued by hunger, as many other independent spirits have been before him. From the cups, too, in which coffee was served up, he shrunk a little at first, in as much as they struck him as being very like those that hold pomatum in England: but, with all these prejudices, there was an apparent determination about him to see and think for himself, which denoted an active and not a weak mind: it seemed, from his manner, as if he felt it due to his country, while he was absent from her, to laugh at, or abuse every thing that differed from her customs, but that he would after his return, ponder upon what he had seen in a more impartial spirit than that in which he had observed.’

The following extracts contain some very just remarks on the appearance of the streets and squares of Paris.

‘We have an English comedy—(not a very good one)—in which a worthy London citizen who has been led into Wales, professes the utmost astonishment that any one can

‘ see beauty in black and rough-looking hills, with torren’s
‘ impeded by stones, and rushing between irregular banks,
‘ falling down their sides. He appeals to the smooth and
‘ level mall, and the carefully preserved canal of St. James’s
‘ Park, which he says are called fine by good judges, to
‘ prove that their immediate opposites must be deformities.
‘ My readers, therefore, who are checking this account of
‘ Paris by their own notions, formed on the spot of observa-
‘ tion, must not even be surprised, far less angry, if they
‘ find that I totally dissent from the statements they have
‘ been giving to their friends. I met with many English
‘ there, who could see nothing but that the streets were
‘ narrow and dirty, and that the fronts of the houses wanted
‘ white-washing, their stairs scouring, and their doors scrap-
‘ ing and scrubbing. Agreeing with all this, and granting the
‘ comfort and respectability accruing from these observan-
‘ ces, I must nevertheless pronounce Paris to be a most mag-
‘ nificent place. The views which it presents are of the
‘ most touching and grand kind ; its appearances are inter-
‘ esting beyond any thing I could before have fancied.
‘ The chief reason of this is, that *character* is indicated by
‘ almost every surface. A system of things, calculated,
‘ with reference to the whole, to produce the greatest ag-
‘ gregate amount of convenience and completeness of every
‘ kind, tames down and restrains the manifestations of indi-
‘ vidual peculiarities. This prevails much more in England
‘ than in France,—and more in London than in Paris. The
‘ consequence is, that, in the English capital, your ideas
‘ and feelings are less frequently and forcibly excited than
‘ in the French.

‘ The first sally forth of a stranger in Paris, will probably
‘ bring him almost immediately on the Boulevarde, and here
‘ he will be forcibly struck by a mass of novelty. The
‘ Boulevarde goes round Paris, and was originally its boun-
‘ dary, but the extension of the city has, in many places,
‘ rendered it central, and it is so in the most fashionable
‘ and frequented quarters, namely, those nearest the palaces
‘ and the theatres. It is, in fact, now, a superb street of
‘ great breadth, lined on each side with trees, between
‘ which and the houses, gravelled walks have been made for
‘ the foot passengers. The general effect here is very
‘ fine. The eye cannot reach to any termination of the
‘ Boulevarde ; and in the distance, the trees according to

‘ the laws of perspective, appear to unite their branches in
‘ an arch, overshadowing with their foliage the hurrying
‘ groupes of men, and women, and horses, and carts, and
‘ carriages, that are perpetually streaming to and fro be-
‘ neath. By moonlight this forms a very grand picture,
‘ and suggests a confession, that London has nothing so fine
‘ in this way.

‘ The best streets of the English metropolis, owe their
‘ beauty, in our estimation, to their possessing those quali-
‘ ties that raise ideas of opulence, comfort, reasonableness,
‘ and general utility : the Parisian Boulevarde is interesting
‘ in strong contrasts, picturesque in inconsistencies, grand
‘ in size, and overpowering through animation. The houses
‘ rise to twice the height of ours ; they are of stone, and
‘ their architecture is generally elaborate. There appear
‘ here no signs of building rows by contract with the
‘ brick-layers, nor any necessity for prescribing by a law,
‘ what shall be the thickness of a party wall. Turn your
‘ eyes whichever way you will, they are met by broad
‘ fronts, decorated with frieses, cornices, pillars, pilasters,
‘ and balconies, and rising to a height that to a stranger
‘ seems stupendous. The chimneys, as the end of a mass
‘ of buildings presents itself, seem clustered turrets and
‘ battlements. The streets that open from the Boulevarde,
‘ appear to dart into a peopled and swarming confusion and
‘ uncertainty ; they promise, as it were, to lead to some-
‘ thing which cannot be foretold from their entrance, instead
‘ of being, what all the principal streets are in London, self-
‘ intimators, that they are lines of receptacles for trade and pro-
‘ perty, and regular domestick life. This character of the
‘ French streets arises from their narrowness, as contrasted
‘ with the height of the massive houses on each side, and other
‘ assemblages together of features, which, in England, are
‘ seldom or never seen near each other. Thus, a grand
‘ gateway would prepare the English visiter for the mansion
‘ of a family of rank, were it not that the court to which it
‘ leads, is filled with litter and dirt, that the doors are open
‘ and filthy, and the persons who appear around them, ill-
‘ dressed and in every way unsuitable. Has the house, then,
‘ been deserted by its original magnificence, and fallen, in a
‘ ruined state, into the possession of the needy, who herd in
‘ its dilapidated rooms? No, not so exactly ; for a carriage
‘ waits to receive the inmate of the first floor,—a Marquis in

‘ an old coat, silk stockings, and a cross ;—a cabriolet, (or one horse chaise) is in attendance for the occupier of the second,—a Colonel in a coloured waistcoat and a regimental coat ;—from the third, a person walks down in non-descript attire, which, however, indicates him to belong mostly to the military class, although, perhaps, at that moment, neither his profession nor his rank could be very easily defined ;—a milliner, with a band-box, trips from the fourth,—and some miserable dependant on the chances of the day, descends from the fifth.’

‘ Pursuing our walk to the first object of a stranger’s interest and curiosity, the palaces of the Louvre and the Tuilleries, we arrive, by going along the wall of the latter, at the Place Louis Quinze, to which I would advise every traveller to make his way at once, avoiding any earlier view of the palaces, that he may be struck by a most extraordinary burst of sumptuous decoration, combining the beauties and magnificence of architecture, sculpture, and gardening, and forming an almost overpowering *coup d’œil*. The Place Louis Quinze is a large open circular space, paved with great neatness, which interposes between the garden of the Tuilleries, and the plantation of the Champs Elysées. The central avenues of both these run into opposite sides of this place. Its back is formed by the dashing colonnade of the Garde Meuble, whose architect, Gabriel, had in view, it is said, to rival Perrault’s famous colonnade of the Louvre. In front is the Pont Louis Seize, one of the finest in Paris, with the elegant face of the Palais Bourbon elevated beyond it, and looking towards you in calm grandeur and well-proportioned beauty ; its style of architecture being that which is well described by Dryden ;—

“ And all below is strength, and all above is grace.”

‘ A line of elegant building runs down from this Palace along the river Seine, of which the Hotel de Salm, lately the Palace de la Legion d’Honneur, is partly seen. The huge gilded dome of the Invalids rises behind, and on the other side, the clustered houses and towers of the most peopled parts of Paris, form themselves into castellated masses.

‘ The spectator after the confusion of his first admiration
‘ is over, will find the spot well calculated for minute ex-
‘ amination. A broad gravelled alley leads down to the
‘ palace of the Tuilleries, through a large and gorgeous gar-
‘ den, laid out according to the French taste,—full of par-
‘ terres, and basins, and statues,—bas-reliefs, urns, and
‘ whatever is entitled *vertû*,—straight walks and tricks in
‘ water. The front of this residence of the monarchs of
‘ France, which has been the scene of so many interesting
‘ events, and which still bears the marks of the cannon balls
‘ of the memorable 10th of August, extends its enormous
‘ length completely across the ground, and presents to the
‘ eye, through the thin taper trees, a broken mass of small
‘ windows, unequal stories, frittered compartments, petty
‘ pilasters, and all that may be termed the freaks and nick-
‘ nacks of architecture. Flitting forms of gay promenaders,
‘ sidle and shift among the branches, and rows of readers of
‘ newspapers, seated on hired chairs, keep their places
‘ among the marble Atalantas, Apollos, Daphnes, and
‘ Satyrs.

‘ Two grand winged horses, by Coizevoix, give grace
‘ and nobleness to the gate which opens from this garden
‘ into the Place Louis Quinze; and, immediately opposite,
‘ the entrance to the Champs Elysées is dignified and
‘ adorned by two fine groupes of horses in marble by N.
‘ Coustou, which were brought here when Marly was dis-
‘ mantled by the Revolutionists. It is now that the Eng-
‘ lishman of taste and sensibility begins to feel the impres-
‘ sion, novel to him, which the sublime productions of sculp-
‘ ture occasion, when interspersed throughout the publick
‘ situations of a city,—mingling the enthusiastick admiration
‘ excited by fine art, with the sober and common reflections
‘ suggested by publick views. It is now he begins to have
‘ a clearer notion, a more lively sense than he ever before
‘ experienced, of the effulgence of those ancient days, when
‘ the girls of Athens, carrying water on their heads in ele-
‘ gant vases, from the fountains to their homes, ascended
‘ magnificent flights of white marble steps, with the stupen-
‘ dous symmetry of the Parthenon rising before them, and
‘ saw there, and on every side, a vast and silent congrega-
‘ tion of the forms of colossal and superhuman beauty,
‘ fraught with the soul of poetry. Paris is still far from
‘ equalling Athens; but it gives an idea of what the glories

‘of the latter were,—and this is more than can be said for
‘London.’

We have selected the following remarks on the system of Buonaparte, as containing many spirited and just observations. The harsh terms he makes use of, brought to our minds an expression in a letter, that has lately appeared in the newspapers, from an eminent personage, now in retirement, in which he speaks of Buonaparte's “*improper conduct*.” Now it can easily be conceived, that a superiour mind should be unwilling to make use of harsh epithets in speaking of fallen grandeur, or adopt that railing, *poissarde* style, which the indignation of mankind has naturally led them into using. In this case, why qualify his “conduct” at all? If an epithet was to be added, we invoke the manes of Johnson, Sheridan, Perry and the rest, to say if there was no other term mores uitable. It reminds us of a person who remarked, that his conduct in burning American ships and confiscating American property, in shooting the Duke D'Enghein, in refusing to allow the Duke of Brunswick to be buried with his ancestors, in the invasion of Spain, and the kidnapping of Ferdinand, had been extremely *indelicate*.

‘From all I have said of the French character and con-
‘dition, it will be seen that I have the worst idea of their so-
‘cial system, as it is at present constituted. It seems to me to
‘be without foundation or compactness.—There are no ge-
‘nerally recognized principles in the public mind,—there
‘are no great bodies to give gravity, and steadiness, and
‘impetus to the state,—there are no respected names in
‘France to lead opinion, to collect the national strength un-
‘der legitimate banners in behalf of honourable purposes.
‘There is, to be sure, much scattered talent and individual
‘enjoyment, and there are the principal materials of great-
‘ness to be found amongst this most singular people,—but
‘they are loose, floating, and unarranged. This, it will be
‘observed, is conceding them the possession of valuable
‘capacities; but, whatever may be the final result, their
‘vanity, which has been the chief cause of the calamities
‘they have suffered themselves, and of those they have in-
‘flicted on all around them, is at present unsupported by
‘their condition. From the revolution they might have de-
‘rived the greatest benefits: it broke up what depressed

‘ and restrained the national energies, it gave play to the
‘ national circulations,—it braced the public nerves, and
‘ put animating objects in the public view. But their vanity
‘ made them the dupes of a cold and crafty tyrant, who has
‘ utterly demoralized them, and who, by addressing himself
‘ exclusively to their besetting faults, has increased them
‘ tenfold.

‘ The imperial influence raised itself on the frailties of
‘ the French character, as displayed under the sway of the
‘ old race of Kings. Its language was that of bombast and
‘ falsehood,—it flattered the conceitedness, that it might
‘ make a prey of the rights of the people,—it corrupted
‘ their hearts that it might employ their hands,—and taught
‘ them to look, as before, to the magnificence of the throne,
‘ as a sufficient compensation for all they lost of respecta-
‘ bility as subjects, and for all they violated of good faith
‘ towards the community of mankind.

‘ The profligate system of Buonaparte required instru-
‘ ments after its own character ; and, with unexampled abi-
‘ lity and villainy, he fashioned the people to suit his views.
‘ The youth of France have been trained up in his schools,
‘ and he has thus left them fit only for his purposes. The
‘ great interest of France, as he has left it, is the military
‘ interest, and this is thwarted and injured by every mea-
‘ sure that tends to promote the peace and substantial im-
‘ provement of humanity. The air of the streets and pub-
‘ lic places of Paris is sufficient to impress this truth with
‘ a melancholy force, and to inspire fears of future distur-
‘ bances. Walking one day in the Jardin des Plantes, I
‘ fell into conversation with a young Frenchman: his friends
‘ had destined him for the medical profession, but the con-
‘ scription had seized him at an early age, and dragged him
‘ from his studies,—and now the peace had left him, at
‘ twenty-five, ignorant and unprovided. He spoke of the
‘ Bourbons with bitterness, and of Buonaparte with zealous
‘ attachment. The family to which he belonged, having
‘ been crossed in their original intentions as to his destina-
‘ tion, united their feelings with his, and saw him, with
‘ regret, deprived of opportunities of thriving in the way of
‘ life to which he had been devoted.

‘ Speaking from what I observed myself, I would say, that
‘ the largest part of the mass of public opinion in France
‘ was, from one cause or other, in favour of Buonaparte.

‘ This appeared to me certain, and it was equally so, that
‘ this tendency of opinion existed in utter independence of
‘ honour and principle, or rather in direct contradiction to
‘ both. They would confess his worst faults, and specify
‘ actions which he had committed, for which he merited
‘ their detestation; after which they would add,—“ Ah,
‘ but he was a great man !” Their affections were his. If
‘ ever the French have shewn constancy, it has been in
‘ favour of Buonaparte. He was evidently best adapted
‘ to their dispositions. It is all nonsense, that we have
‘ heard, about their groaning under him. He gave their
‘ vanity objects and gratifications : he made themselves and
‘ others believe in the glory of the French nation,—he
‘ brought them pictures, he built them palaces, he talked to
‘ them about destiny, and France, and empire, all in a
‘ breath. This is the system of management which is sure
‘ to be successful with the people of whom I am writing,
‘ and by these means popularity may be enjoyed, while
‘ perfidy, violence, and cruelty, destroy the public reputa-
‘ tion, and the most valuable public properties.

‘ The conscription was not considered in France, as so
‘ heavy an evil as we have been in the habit of conceiving
‘ it, with our English notions. In the first place, the French
‘ evidently want deep domestic feeling : a violent burst of
‘ grief, succeeded in a few days by a violent burst of
‘ laughter, is all that can be expected from a people whose
‘ domestic economy is of the nature I have described.
‘ Home is the only nurse for the heart ; and home is disre-
‘ garded in Paris. In the next place, the habits and views
‘ of this people are military : parents have been in the cus-
‘ tom of looking to the army as affording a provision for
‘ their sons, and they seemed to me rather to grieve than
‘ rejoice that they had got them back. The great object
‘ of their exertions was to procure them new appointments,
‘ which would again remove them from their families.

‘ The capacities of the French nation, however, I repeat,
‘ are great.—The advantages of what is called a common
‘ education, are universally diffused ; and a taste for reading,
‘ for accomplishment, for all the embellishments of existence,
‘ is a general characteristic. The peasants have it,—and
‘ in almost as high a degree as the most cultivated persons.
‘ The poorer orders, as I have already observed, are polished
‘ far beyond the corresponding classes in England, and the
‘ effect of their behaviour is extremely pleasing. One is

chiefly surprised by the propriety of their mode of speaking: the ceremonies of courtesy, and the idiomatic phrases of politeness, proceeding from milk-women and carmen to each other, rather amaze an Englishman. The lowest persons touch their hats to each other in the streets. Two men, whom I observed playing at piquet in an open vegetable shop, deported themselves towards each other with all the punctilio of two gentlemen of fashion. Their language too, frequently surprises you, as elevated far beyond their station. A washerwoman, describing a hot foggy day, said,—“*the fog poured down like the breath of a flame!*” The keeper of the Temple, speaking of some rough stones which Buonaparte had ordered to be brought there from Fontainebleau, said,—“*it is the chisel of many a day, that has engraven those marks.*” Walking along the quay one morning, I heard a woman who sold the crockery-ware that was displayed on the ground, instructing her daughter in the social duties of life. The practical part of her lesson was a caution not to encroach, as the girl had been doing with her cups and saucers, on her neighbour, a bookseller, whose volumes were also on the ground. “The great art of life, *ma fille*,” said she, “is to do as much good for yourself as possible, provided you do no harm to your neighbour.”

Yet even with regard to the common knowledge, which the common affairs of life require, it will be found, on a close observation, that they are wonderfully more uninformed than the brisk adroitness of their manners would at first lead you to imagine. It is very possible that you may see the hostess of a country inn, seated under the vine at her door, reading Voltaire's *Henriade*, yet the same woman will not be able to take twelve sous from a thirty sous piece, and return you the change. The middle and lower orders of Paris, are in the lowest state of ignorance, as to actual facts and sound opinions. They know nothing of what passes beyond the observation of their eyes, and may easily be deceived as to that. Their judgments are weak, in proportion as their impressions are lively. They may be induced to believe any thing that is monstrous, and thus it is easy to lead them to commit all sorts of monstrosities. It was in this way that the atrocities of the revolution were perpetrated. No story was too absurd to be credited by the people,—and each new

‘ day, brought, in the shape of a ridiculous lie, an inducement to some horrible enormity. It is easy to see with what facility a people, thus distinguished by susceptibility and ignorance, may be duped into the extravagancies and errors which stain the modern history of France. Their vivacity is but the liveliness of credulous vanity, almost always exercising itself in hostility to duties and truths. A Frenchman will credit whatever you please to tell him, and commit whatever you please to direct, provided you in some measure connect your story and your command with the idea in his mind, that France is the only country worth naming in the world, and that he is, or may become, one of the most distinguished Frenchmen. A Parisian shopkeeper is likely enough to ask, whether in England we are not accustomed to have boxing matches in our drawing-rooms, and, in the same breath, descant on the glories of David’s last picture, and the *scarcely inferiour* excellence of Raphael’s Transfiguration.

‘ The standard then of manners, is high in France,—and the standard of their conversation is still higher,—but, in the substantials of knowledge and conduct, they are below both these. Further, their accomplishments and attainments are all carefully and exclusively adapted to have an effect on the society of the day and place,—which is society in its most contracted sense—this is their main, or rather their *only* object, and it is inconsistent with what is most worthy of present respect, to say nothing of what is most likely to secure the respect of futurity.

‘ But a people with these lively notions, full of the amour propre, and whose multitudes catch inspiration from objects that, in other countries, have no influence but on a select few, cannot but form a nation of rapidity in action, of splendid appearances, of interest and of celebrity. And, under a good government,—one which should have no interest in flattering their faults,—and under which the expression of truth might be permitted to go forth, at freedom to detect vanities and imperfections wherever they lurk,—whether in politics, in manners, in art, or in literature,—they would bid fair to attain a pitch formidable to all competitors. Hitherto, however, they have but astounded Europe to their own shame and calamity. They are lamentably ignorant of what I may call the A, B, C, of moral rectitude. They have not fixed in their minds

‘ the few elementary principles, to which every action or proposal might be at once referred, as to a certain test of its propriety. I have usually found that the most abrupt, and even violent contradictions, were followed, in the course of the stream of conversation, by an unguarded admission of facts, which proved all that had been originally denied. Against the summing up, if they dislike its tendency, they will stoutly protest, but will readily admit, and even furnish particular pieces of evidence, that lead to an unfavourable verdict. This inconsistency arises from a looseness of knowledge, and slightness of feeling as to right and wrong :—the cardinal points of morality are not marked on their minds to guide their course. For want of these, they often glory in their shame, and bewilder themselves and others by admiring inconsistently, resenting wrongfully, and submitting abjectly.’

Some of his observations on the women of France, are just, and discover a keen observer ; others border a little on vulgar belief—the *boudoir* being devoted to voluptuousness and sacred against the intrusion of the husband, are quite in this style. The *boudoir*, is a very small apartment belonging to every extensive suite of rooms. It is generally fitted up with exquisite taste and elegance, and may sometimes serve for voluptuous purposes, as well as a bed-chamber ; but it is generally a place where a lady receives two or three confidential friends, where they may feel more snug and comfortable, as we should say, than in a large apartment. The author has introduced one or two particular anecdotes to draw from them general inferences, but this is a dangerous practice. Without quoting those we refer to, we may exemplify this, by one we heard from good authority. Lady ——— the wife of a British Minister, who resided at the Court of Versailles previous to the revolution, had a large family of ten fine children. The Queen had heard so much of them, that she requested her to bring them all to the palace, that she might see them. She was flattered by this wish of the Queen, and on the appointed time went accompanied by them all, with bright eyes, ruddy cheeks, and curling hair, like a whole shop window of dolls. Thus attended, her heart filled with very pardonable maternal vanity ; her spirits were a little damped, on hearing, as she passed through the Ladies of Honour,

one of them in a disdainful whisper exclaim *O ! comme c'est cochon d'avoir tant d'enfans !* It is possible that this little ebullition of envy, might have been characteristic of the ladies about the Court, but it would have been hard to have cited it, as a proof that all the women of France, thought it disreputable to have a large family of children.

' The air of the French females, it must be acknowledged, is full of a certain species of witchery ; but it is strongly marked by mannerism. Its secret seems to lie in making the external woman exclusively display the peculiarities of her sex ; her looks, her turns, her whole manner of speaking and acting is sexual. The distinction between male and female is never for a moment lost sight of by either. In England it frequently happens, that a gentleman for some time addresses a lady in a way, that would leave a person who should only hear the observations, but not see to whom they were directed, perfectly ignorant whether the conversation were held with a man or a woman. But this could scarcely ever happen in France ; the *tourneur* of the phrase, when a woman is spoken to, cannot be mistaken : it is modelled according to her peculiar instincts, charms, and weaknesses, and so is the carriage of him who speaks to her. In this consists the politeness of the French to the softer sex, of which they boast ; but the question is, whether it does not imply a stooping to, instead of a raising towards ? Can women have any thing given them in the shape of deference that can atone for the loss of equality ? Is it humouring they are fond of ? We humour a child and spoil it by so doing ; we humour the sick and the weak ; we humour eccentricity and folly ; but we never humour sound sense and propriety. The first instance of humouring had very unlucky consequences.

" Wouldst thou had hearkened to my words, and staid
 " With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
 " Desire of wandering this unhappy morn,
 " I know not whence, possess'd thee ; we had then
 " Remain'd still happy ; not, as now, despoil'd
 " Of all our good ; shamed, naked, miserable."

Paradise Lost, book IX.

' The women of Paris are entirely creatures of management and manner :—the chief business of society is left to them to transact ;—a tradesman entrusts the concerns

‘ of his shop to his wife,—a gentleman asks no guests to his house but with her permission. There is every where an affectation of placing every thing at the discretion and disposal of the females,—but it is still evident, that this empire is granted to their weakness, and they are thus taught to make a parade of their sexual peculiarities, that they may gain pampering and indulgence at the expense of their respectability. They are raised above their helpmates, as men and women raise children on high chairs, and help the young folks first to pudding. In this very preference there is an insult ; but there is worse degradation in the employment to which they are put. They are taught to make the most of their influence as women, in order to gain for themselves and those connected with them, the mercenary ends which arise out of the competitions, hazards, desires, and necessities of daily life. The bad effect of this on the delicacy of their minds, requires no exposure, and their artificial, active, adroit, and intriguing habits, have, in fact, given to their physiognomies and manner, an acute, watching, attacking sort of air, which, however powerful it may be in its way, is not the power which most properly belongs to woman, or that most exquisitely becomes her in its exercise.

‘ The system of educating and training young women in France, is open to the most serious objections. Girls, in respectable life, are placed, as they grow up, under a strict surveillance : they are never entrusted beyond the eye of the mother or governess. If they are permitted to pay a visit to a female friend of the family, the hostess is sensible she incurs the heaviest responsibility. The youthful guest must not sleep beyond the immediate superintendence of her entertainer ; a bed is made up for her in the cabinet of the lady of the house. She must not dance but with the partner selected by her friends ; she must not sit down with her partner after she has danced :—in short, strictness and guardianship are the substitutes for formation of character, and, without paying any regard to the mind, the body is pampered and preserved for the accomplishment of the future views of a mercenary and cold authority, that looks but to sordid interests, and is careless of virtue and of happiness.

‘ This degrading system of watch and ward, is absolutely necessary according to the habits of Paris, for they are

‘ directly levelled against whatever would warrant confidence, in the sense of integrity and honour in the young female mind. Mothers will not, indeed, instruct their daughters to intrigue after they are married,—and they will not, probably, talk of their own licentious indulgences before their daughters ; but their conversation with their intimates, in the hearing of their children, is sufficiently instructive, that connubial constancy is in little estimation, and less practice. Such a lady, they will say, speaking of one who has a husband and children, is not now on terms with *that* gentleman—*that* affair is over long ago :—it is now Monsieur —

‘ These breaches of nuptial fidelity, it is affirmed, are less universal at present than they were before the revolution ; but, I believe, it is doing no injustice to the state of French morals to say, that they now constitute the majority of cases of conduct after wedlock in the genteel circles of Paris :—before the revolution a case of post-nuptial chastity in these circles was neither known nor expected. At present, the indulgence is managed with no needless display of indecency ; but it is perfectly well understood, both by the husband and society, and the indulging party is not severely treated by either.

‘ It is not thought an insult, in Paris, if a man, sitting down by a married lady, immediately commences making love to her. His language is divested of all unnecessary explicitness ; but it has a sufficiently palpable tendency to the last favour that a woman can grant. It is, in fact, a mere matter of course almost, to address a French married lady in those terms of gallantry, which, in England, are employed to females whose persons are still disposable. The woman to whom they are directed may not be inclined to listen to them,—she may be engaged at the moment, or the application may be disagreeable ;—but she never thinks of resenting the application as offensive.—In short, a husband here cannot rationally calculate on his wife’s fidelity, and I believe, very seldom does. If the parties, *after* marriage, feel themselves very much attached to each other, their reciprocal fidelity is secured by a mutual pledge on honour, which is added to the compact made at the altar, as an extra obligation, not necessarily included in the original engagement.

‘ In Paris, it is the regular business of parents to marry their children ; the idea of the latter conducting so serious an affair for themselves, would shock every father and mother in that capital. For this purpose, they announce every where what portion they can afford to their son or daughter, and, without hesitation, enquire of all persons whom they know, that have progeny of which a match may be made, what portions they intend to give. The most incessant attention is given to this grand affair, and a Parisian mother devotes a degree of industry, dexterity, and frequently artifice, to effect the settlement of her children in the world, which no woman but a French woman could display, and which reflect much credit on her talents, although the view taken of the real interests of those for whom she concerns herself is far from a judicious one.

‘ The sole object to which they direct their efforts is, to accomplish a match which may be advantageous to their child in worldly matters—namely, in point of fortune or connections. As these are things which have no sort of connection with inclination on either side, it sometimes happens that a marriage is agreed upon between the parents, for some years before the girl’s age will permit it to be consummated. A young lady of the highest rank, whose nuptials took place when I was in Paris, had been accustomed to say to her governess, who was an Englishwoman,—“ They tell me I am to be married at fifteen : I wish I knew to whom ;—I dare say I shall like him,—don’t you think I shall ?” Girlish feeling prompts this anticipation of satisfaction,—the awful contract for life is hailed for no better reason than that it affords a prospect of escaping from the irksome restraints that have been already described, the commands of the parents are signified and obeyed, and two persons come together whom no impulse of their own has brought together, who can have no well founded confidence in each other, and whose minds are prepared before hand to give ready access to levity and inordinate desires.

‘ After marriage, the wife, young, and uninstructed in morals and duties, is at once emancipated from a state of severe restraint, and plunged into one of licentious liberty and unnatural power,—of which a few of the features are, a luxurious Boudoir, full of couches and statues—separate

‘ bed rooms,—a lover in every visitor, and the customs of
‘ society opposed to cruelty to lovers. It is needless to
‘ deduce consequences from these,—their existence is suffi-
‘ ciently informing.

‘ The system of married life in France, is one by which
‘ the lady enjoys a sort of artificial authority and influence,
‘ raising her to appearance much above the claims of her
‘ sex and relationship, but existing at the expense of that
‘ cordial communication and heartfelt, disinterested defer-
‘ ence, which distinguish unions founded on a more judi-
‘ cious basis than that which I have been describing. She
‘ is installed in various prerogatives that look flattering
‘ and desirable, but they are chiefly favourable to the dis-
‘ charge of functions, from which a true respect for her sex,
‘ cherished by the men, would entirely preserve her, and
‘ the enjoyment of gratifications which a proper self-re-
‘ spect on her own part would prohibit her from partaking.

‘ The chief emblem and representation of this condition
‘ of married women, is the Boudoir. It is a temple of sepa-
‘ ration and luxury. It belongs to the wife exclusively ;
‘ the husband has neither property in it, nor power over it.
‘ If she were suspected of having a lover concealed within
‘ its mysterious enclosure, that enclosure, nevertheless,
‘ must not be violated. What I mean is, that such is the
‘ good manners in France, and the man who disregards it is
‘ esteemed a brute,—an object of the general dislike and
‘ disgust of both sexes. The Boudoir is the apartment, as
‘ I have before observed, that is most commonly complete
‘ in its elegance. The nursery for the children, in the hou-
‘ ses of families of rank, contrary to the custom in England,
‘ is neglected, and crammed into some inconvenient corner ;
‘ but the Boudoir for the mother, is rich in couches, in sta-
‘ tues, in paintings, and flowers. It is a retreat in which
‘ Venus might be happy to recline, and is, in every respect,
‘ calculated to inspire the sentiments which belong to the
‘ devotion in which that goddess delights.

‘ One effect of what I have been describing is, that,
‘ amidst this general profligacy, the grosser features of
‘ vice are not frequently seen. A woman who swerves
‘ from her sex’s point of honour in England, is aware that
‘ she has committed an unpardonable offence, and the coarse-
‘ ness of depravity ensues from the very consciousness of
‘ the enormity of her crime. But it is very different in

‘ France. A female there who has committed adultery, regards herself, and is regarded by others, as not more culpable than if she were a little too extravagant, or too addicted to play; or rather fond of going from home. Her mind, therefore, experiences little, if any alteration, in consequence of the violation of her person: it is but little, or rather not at all, worse than it was before. It must be admitted, that this is a better state of disposition and feeling, than usually exists in union with a disregard of chastity in England, but how worthless is it as a general standard of the female heart,—and is it not infinitely better to meet with instances of gross depravity, as disgusting exceptions to the general purity, than to find purity no where, and every where a dissoluteness, insulting and confounding virtue by assuming the air of decency ?

We close our extracts with the letter from an Irishman of distinction, published in the *Morning Chronicle*, which as was said of it, “was evidently the picture of one extreme, drawn by a masterly but incontinent hand.” It is in reality an extravagant caricature in some parts, yet drawn with great spirit. We hope the author’s ideas on spitting, may meet the sight of some of the class in our country, where this practice of expectoration is disgustingly common. Some of those promising young men, who think it an accomplishment to spit like a boatswain or a groom, may receive a salutary hint from it.

‘ I fear war will soon unfold her tattered banners on the continent. This poor country is in a deplorable state—a ruined noblesse—a famished clergy—a state of smothered war between the upstarts and the restored—their finances most distressed—the military spirit divided—the most opposite opinions as to the lasting of the present form of things—every thing unhinged—yet I really sympathize with this worried, amiable, and perhaps contemptible people; so full of talent and vice—so frivolous, so inconstant and prone to change—so ferocious too in their fickleness; about six revolutions within twenty years, and as fresh as ever for a new dance.

‘ These strange vicissitudes of man draw tears, but they also teach wisdom. I never found my mind so completely a magick lantern—such a rapid succession of disjointed

' images—the past, the present, the future possibly. One ought not to be hasty in taking up bad impressions, and I need not say that three weeks can give but little room for observation; but from what I do see and learn from others, who have seen long and deeply, I have conceived the worst idea of *social Paris*.

' Every thing on the surface is horrible; beastlinesses, which with us do not exist. They actually seem, in talk and practice, to cultivate a familiarity with nastiness. In every publick place they are spitting on your shoes, in your plate, almost in your mouth. Such community of secretions is scarcely to be borne; then the contrast makes it worse, gaudiness more striking by filth: the splendid palace for the ruler, the hovel and the sink for the ruled; the fine box for the despot, the pigeon holes for the people! And it strikes me with sadness, that the women can be little more than the figurantes, receiving a mock reverence merely to carry on the drama; but neither cherished nor respected. How vile the feeling and the taste that can degrade them from being the real directors and mistresses of man, to be the mere soubrettes of society, gilded and smart, and dexterous and vicious. Even before the Revolution, manners were bad enough, but many causes since have rubbed off the gilding. The exile of the nobles, the succession of low men to power; and more than all, the elevation of plebeian soldiers to high rank, promoting, of course, their trulls to a station where manners and morals were under their influence; and this added to the horrible example set by Buonaparte himself in his own interiour. Add to this, what must have sent down the contagion to the still lower orders—the *conscription*—the wretched men, marrying without preference, merely to avoid the army, and then running into that army to escape their ill chosen partners. All these causes must have conspired to make a frightful carnage in manners and morals too. In short, I am persuaded, that a single monster has done more to demoralize and uncivilize this country, than a century can repair.

We cannot refrain from adding a few words on the state of France. One consoling reflection may be drawn from it, which is the superiority of a free government to a despotism. France, with her vast power, her talents and population, and at one period she controlled all that Europe possessed

of both, was beaten at last, by a population of half the number, distracted by parties, and torn with civil dissensions. That this was owing to the spirit of freedom in that country, and the energy it created, there can be no doubt. This invaluable principle France seems incapable of possessing, and whatever is the name of the Sovereign, Director, Emperour or King, the government is paramount, and admits of no remonstrance or discussion.

The misfortunes of France furnish the grandest political moral, that history can shew. They have accumulated to an equal amount with her usurpations, her injustice and violence. In the infliction of retribution nothing was wanting; the action and the scenes were even highly picturesque and dramattick. Her sufferings are indeed great; so much blood, so much treasure, and so much glory wasted. And when she is devastated, overthrown, her territory divided—her enemies, and who can blame a just vengeance, demand from her the restoration of the plunder she had taken. Pictures and statues and medals might be restored; but the wealth, the spoils of so many nations, which with furious cries demanded its return—where was it? not in France, but, exploded, gone along with all her own substance, every livre that the most grinding finance could extort or anticipate, all had been sunk in the infernal vortex of war; converted into gunpowder, and blown into air.

In this state of misery, she sees her enemies triumphant on every point. England, after talking so feelingly, and so loudly about the ambition of France, as if she had none herself; after having in successful warfare drawn such vast sums from the capture and ruin of French, Dutch, and Spanish commerce, winds up with possessing all India, the finest colonies in the West-Indies; and not content with Malta in the Mediterranean, takes the Greek islands under her protection. The ambition of France has been every where defeated, the ambition of England every where triumphant. Without colonies, without commerce, how is she to employ the dangerous, embittered, military spirits, that are spread over her territory. She is deprived of her former colonies, and prohibited forming new ones; and yet the English travellers complain, that these men are turbulent, gloomy and ferocious. This is indeed realizing Peter Pindar's story of *bienseance*.

What are we to hope for France? she seems destined to the most wretched extremes. We know not where to sympa-

thise with her, there appears no medium. If we curse the police, the conscription, the brutal, exclusive love of war in Buonaparte; is there no refuge, but in a government which commences its administration by suffering the massacre of Protestants, vowing silver images to the Virgin, and refusing burial to an actress?—The continuance of such a state of things is impossible! what the change will be, it is in vain to predict.

France may be considered in a state of permanent decline; perhaps the climax of her prosperity was about the middle of the last century. It is however a very difficult thing for contemporaries to designate epochs of this kind; in an oak tree, the branches and the trunk may exhibit the signs of vigour long after the heart is decayed. Some have even doubted whether the improvement in certain modern arts and sciences might not prevent the decline of modern nations. But the tendency to decay is inevitable in every thing of human construction. We have living examples of this; the Italian states, which grew up from the roots of the Roman empire, were mere shrubs, and never produced a single stock of any vigour; and they are declined from what they were; the mechanical progress of decay is even visible to the eye; they are now only the provinces, more or less dependent on the great powers of Europe. Spain too is a most remarkable instance, she is approaching the last stages of decay. A revolution in an old state like France, cannot restore youth; it is a crisis, that in proportion to its violence will advance decrepitude. She may linger on for some ages, and have some bright moments; so it was with the Roman empire in the first centuries of our era. France has lost her colonies, her commercial riches, a large part of her accumulation of permanent wealth; her army is disorganized, her marine ruined, her finances embarrassed; it will take three geuerations to replace her population in a natural state; still worse than all these, her ancient civil and religious institutions subverted from their very foundations; it is imposible to replace them; imperfect and even vicious as they were, they yet formed some substitute for the more perfect organization of free governments, which place so many gradations between the sovereign and the people, at once the organs, the checks, the supports of both: these France has lost, and the loss is irretrievable; she is then doomed to a despotism, and the only hope she can have of internal security, is, in the energy of this depotism.